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ABSTRACT

The editorial page of the newspaper is of recognized importance both to the newspaper itself and to public life. Data from a survey taken of 178 newspaper editors in four circulation categories support the following recommendations for improvement of the editorial page: take stands on important issues, emphasize local issues, improve the thinking and writing involved in editorial production, and sometimes forgo writing the editorial in favor of taking direct action with parties involved in an issue. The use of readers' letters, of cartoons, and of local and syndicated columns can improve the effectiveness of the editorial page by increasing the readership and by building rapport with the readers. Other suggested improvements include the expanded use of opposing editorial view points, including such features as guest columns, pro and con articles, special columns, and reader polls. The improvement of appearance, staff, and research is also recommended. (DF)

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Editorial Pages Are Vital -- They Can Be Improved

(A paper prepared for presentation to the Newspaper Division of the Association for Education in Journalism at its 1977 convention in Madison, Wisconsin.)

by

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Editorial Pages Are Vital -- They Can Be Improved

Will the editorial page, long a staple of daily newspapers in the United States, soon be consigned to the archives of history? Or is it still a useful vehicle with vast potential for improving newspapers and serving people? What are editors doing with these pages in the late 1970s? How might they improve them to help readers meet the challenges of the last quarter of the 20th century?

A few newspapers may have written off their editorial pages, as they have placed increasing amounts of interpretation, analysis, and even opinion on their news pages. Evidently, some readers have written them off, as readership of editorial pages has slipped in the past decade. Edgar T. Zelsmann, president of Carl J. Nelson Research, Inc., reported earlier this year that the average readership of one or more items on the page had dropped since 1968. At that time it was 61% for men and 57% for women; today it is 54% for men and 52% for women.[1]

These figures are not encouraging, even when tempered by the fact that few expect editorials and editorial pages to be as well read as some of the less challenging features. But most editors evidently still see editorial pages as valuable, perhaps essential. Editorial pages help newspapers separate news from opinion, and this separation enables them to provide necessary interpretation and commentary without losing credibility. Should

newspapers abandon their editorial pages, and not replace them with some not-yet-defined equivalent, they likely would lose their believability and their potential for helping individuals find their way through masses of facts to beneficial, meaningful action. Should they fail in this responsibility, the democratic system, and the American way of life which has evolved under it, could suffer irreparable damage; democracy's ultimate success depends on the extent to which the electorate is informed and involved in matters of public interest.

Editorial pages, effectively used, can assist newspapers in helping people both individually and collectively. First, they can provide a vehicle for editors to exert community leadership through expressions of opinions on important issues, especially local issues. Second, they can provide a forum for cartoonists, columnists, and readers to join with editors in identifying and debating important issues. Moreover, as Louis M. Lyons, long-time curator of the Nieman Foundation, said a few years ago, editorial pages express the tone of the newspaper. They provide a chance "to represent the institution (itself), as a thoughful person, a good neighbor, one who cares. The tone reflects the character of the paper." [2]

Editorial pages should be improved, not eliminated, and it appears that many newspapers, large and small, are seeking to do just that. An extensive survey of daily newspaper editors and editorial page editors conducted by the author indicates that these editors still consider their editorial pages vital and are seeking to improve them.[3] This survey included approximately one-fifth of the nation's daily newspapers, randomly selected from Editor & Publisher Yearbook. Editors were asked, among other things, what they are

trying to accomplish through their editorial pages and what steps they have taken in recent years to improve them. Responses were received from 178 editors (50.8%) and divided into four circulation categories (less than 10,000, 10,001-25,000, 25,001-100,000, and 100,000 and over) for purposes of discussion and comparison. The groups included 48, 64, 49 and 17 respondents, respectively.

This paper explores some of the ways suggested by these editors and by other sources for making editorial pages more effective. Prerequisites to progress are a strong desire to improve and a willingness to become involved in local issues of public concern. Good editorials and good editorial pages usually are the result of good policies formulated by good editors supported by good owners. In most instances the newspaper's emphasis must be at the local level where it has the greatest potential both for helping and influencing people. With this in mind, let's look at the following areas where improvements are being made or could be made: 1) editorials, 2) editorial page staples, including letters, cartoons, and columns, 3) other editorial or opposite editorial page features, 4) appearance, 5) staffs, and 6) research.

Editorials

The often-repeated statement that little is wrong with editorial pages which could not be remedied by good editorials seems an over-simplification. Good cartoons, columns, letters, and other features presented in a pleasing manner also are important. Nevertheless, it seems likely that the key to developing a good editorial page is presenting well-written editorials that take strong stands on issues that are important to readers. Such editorials enable the newspaper to express leadership; they provoke responses which can

help develop the editorial page as a battleground of ideas. It is encouraging that 92% of editors responding to the author's survey said they seek to provide community leadership through institutional stands on important issues as well as by providing a forum for the exchange of information and opinion.

What then can newspapers do to improve their editorials? First, they can take stands on important issues. Unfortunately, the blandness in editorials that concerned Mark Ethridge in his Sigma Delta Chi Foundation lecture 10 years ago[4] has not entirely disappeared. Reed Sarratt, executive vice-president of Southern Newspaper Publishers Association, told the National Conference of Editorial Writers in late 1974 that most of the editorials he was reading "do not reveal a strong heart, conscience, or character. They say little that contributes to knowledge, understanding, or even amusement of the reader. They are dull, uninteresting, depersonalized space-fillers. They seldom express an opinion recognizable as such."[5] While all newspapers are not guilty of the shortcomings suggested by Mr. Sarratt, most newspapers could provide more vigor on their editorial pages by speaking strongly on vital issues.

Second, more newspapers need to emphasize local issues. They need to bring their weight to bear at the point where it most likely can have positive influence. While it is encouraging to note that 87% of the editors surveyed endorse political candidates at some level of government, it is disturbing that only 69% endorse local candidates. (See Table 1). Even more disturbing is the fact that 15% of the newspapers, mostly small ones, said they most often rely on non-staff sources for editorials. (See Table 2). "Canned," or syndicated, editorials may at times provide a well-phrased

argument with which an editor can agree on a national issue; but they offer no help at the local level where his influence is greatest. Much more encouraging is the fact that almost two-thirds (62%) of the editors indicated that they had placed greater emphasis on local issues in recent years. Endorsing local issues may be even more important than endorsing local candidates. Some newspapers announce goals for the year each January and report periodically on progress toward them. Others include short statements of goals in their mastheads as reminders. Many react to issues as they arise.

A random survey of daily newspaper editorialists taken by the author this past year indicates that they have turned more toward local topics in recent years and expect to continue this trend during the next decade. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the 133 respondents in that study identified more local topics as a developing trend, and almost a fourth (23%) predicted that a greater emphasis on local topics and issues will be the most important change in editorials in the next decade. [6]

Third, most newspapers can improve many of their editorials by improving the thinking and writing involved in them. Clarity is essential. First, clarity of thought; then, clarity of expression. Editorial writers must be given time to research their subjects thoroughly and organize their thoughts before writing; they must be given time to rewrite if substantial changes are needed. Some newspapers place too much emphasis on instant comment. Few issues worth writing editorials about will be resolved or cease to be issues within 24 hours. Clarity can be fostered by reducing rhetoric. Yet editorial writers must guard against the temptation to write briefly solely for the achievement of brevity. Short editorials about important and complex

issues may be a waste of time. For the record, 22% of the editors surveyed indicated that they had cut the length of their editorials in recent years as compared with only 3% who said they were writing longer editorials.

Desmond Stone, editor of the Democrat & Chronicle editorial page in Rochester, New York, urged in a recent article in The Masthead that editorial writers put some "zing" in their writing. He said editorial writing should have the "same high readability, the same tight organization, the same vivid phrase-making, the same scene-setting" as the best feature writing, investigative reporting, or column. Stone said too many editorials are flat, colorless and pedestrian and urged writers to use good imagery, be more passionate in their writing when appropriate, and to make their editorials march.[7]

Finally, editors should remember the admonition of Professor Kenneth R. Byerly in The Masthead more than a decade ago that some of the best editorials are those not written.[8] A telephone call or letter to a responsible official or group representative may provide an early positive resolution of an issue whereas an angry comment may prompt intransigence and cause unnecessary delays.

The Other Staples

Letters to the editor, cartoons, and columns are editorial page staples along with editorials. More than 96% of the daily newspapers surveyed use all four. Letters may be especially valuable since almost half (46%) of the editors ranked letters as the best-read item on their editorial pages; 22% ranked editorials first; 16% ranked cartoons first; 14% ranked local columns first and 2% ranked syndicated columns first.

Newspapers can encourage letter writers by running as many of their efforts as possible in a prominent position on the editorial page; many

already do. Although use varies greatly with the size of the newspaper, 81% of all newspapers surveyed use at least 70% of their letters. This use varies from metropolitan newspapers that use about 10% of the thousands of letters received each year to small newspapers that use virtually all of the few hundred letters that they receive each year. Some writers may be encouraged to write if their names are withheld from publication for cause, as 46% of the newspapers surveyed do. More letters can be used if their length is restricted; about 61% of the newspapers surveyed maintain limits of from 250 to 300 words. Some editors may also wish to limit letters to residents of their circulation area or limit the number of letters from any one person that will be published in a given time period, such as one letter a month.

One possible way to increase the number of letters received is to let readers phone them in. Some persons who might be reluctant to write out a letter by hand, or even on a typewriter, might be willing to say it to a recorder by telephone. Joanna Wragg, editorial writer for the Miami News, noted, too, that since her newspaper started its telephone letter offer that the number of mailed letters had noticeably increased. Both phoned and mailed letters received by the News are transcribed by a typist for editing on a Video Display Terminal, and no distinctions are made in their presentation in the newspaper. The News requires the telephone numbers of persons who phone in letters so they can verify who called them in.[9]

Letters provide a particularly useful device for building rapport with readers and thereby encouraging greater interest in other items on the editorial page. They help destroy insofar as newspapers are concerned the myth that newspapers, government, schools, and other institutions are beyond

the reach of individuals. They provide the reader with a sense of participation even if he never personally writes a letter. They should not be used as a measurement of public opinion, but may serve to suggest areas in which public opinion should be measured.

Many newspapers could improve their editorial pages by using more local cartoons. While 95% of those surveyed use syndicated cartoons for pictorial commentary on national and international issues, only about 25%, mostly large newspapers, employ their own cartoonists and only about 48% of these persons devote full-time to the editorial page. A survey of cartoonists conducted by the author this past year indicated that the cartoonists themselves regard Herblock (Herbert Block) of the Washington Post, Paul Conrad of the Los Angeles Times, and Pat Oliphant of the Washington Star-News among the "best liberal" cartoonists and Jeff MacNelly of the Richmond News Leader as the "best conservative" cartoonist.[10] But even cartoons by these and other leaders in the field cannot fully take the place of a hard-hitting local drawing or picture depicting an important local issue.

Many newspapers could improve their editorial pages by running a better cross-section of political columns. They might include a local column or two, a balance of liberal and conservative political columns, an investigative or reportorial column, and perhaps a column emphasizing humor. The survey of editors ranked Jack Anderson, Joseph Kraft, James Reston, and Nicholas Von Hoffman high among the liberals; James J. Kilpatrick, William F. Buckley, Jr., and George Will tops among the conservatives; Anderson, Rowland Evans, Jr. and Robert D. Novak and David Broder high among the reporter-columnists, and Art Buchwald, Russell Baker and Dick West as leading humorists. There are, of course, many other good persons available.

The survey indicated that 61% of the newspapers now seek to provide

a balance between liberal and conservative columnists whereas only 12% run largely columnists whose philosophies are similar to those of the newspaper. The other 27% said they select their columnists for their ability to draw readers regardless of political philosophy. (See Table 6).

Other Features

The expanded use of opposite editorial pages has expanded the space available for features other than the staples. But it must be noted that only 30% of the respondents indicated that they have opposite editorial pages and on all but the largest newspapers it generally is a once-a-week offering, usually on Sundays. New features can be substituted one or two days a week for staples or used in the space opened up by adding an opposite editorial page. The list of possibilities includes guest columns of various kinds, pro and con discussions, a question-of-the-week or issue-of-the-week feature, a special column by the editor to discuss the newspaper and its staff, exchange editorials from other publications, reader editorials, responses to coupons, and pictures.

While the guest column or article is not new, it has been popularized in recent years by the New York Times. Early in the 1970s the Times added an opposite editorial page and began soliciting guest columns from a variety of sources to use in some of the space made available. This approach has many variations. For some years the Athens (Ga.) Banner-Herald has featured each week a guest column by some professor at the University of Georgia on his field of special interest. The Chicago Tribune developed a column by a blue collar worker some time ago, and the Minneapolis Star attracted new readers of various ages in the late 1960s by using a weekly "voice of youth" column by a student journalist.[11] Early in this decade the Salt Lake Tribune developed a "Common Carrier" feature to share comments

by leaders of social, economic, and political organizations in its circulation area.[12] Slightly more than a third (34%) of the editors indicated that they use columns by guest experts to some degree.

The pro-con technique, now used by a number of newspapers, can be a very effective tool for providing information and provoking thought. The St. Petersburg Times has reported good success with its pro-con package, inaugurated in September, 1971. Robert T. Pittman, editorial page editor, said the approach is intended to give both sides of an issue, the newspaper's editorial position, and a chance for reader response. He said the approach will not work for all issues, but can be effective if the discussion can be framed in answer to a direct and objectively phrased question. Editorial writers can develop the opposing arguments, using a reporting style and attributing information to sources; columnists can be used to provide opposing views; outside experts can be invited to write the opposing views, or pro-con packages prepared by Congressional Quarterly can be used for some issues. Pittman noted that 2,264 persons, each using his own stamp, responded to a pro-con feature on whether the Watergate hearings should be continued. For the record, the tally was yes, 1,215, and no, 1,049.[13] Almost a fourth (23%) of the editors said they have begun using the pro-con technique in recent years.

Coupons also can be effective devices for increasing interest in the editorial pages, especially if they are used in conjunction with some feature such as the pro-con column. Pittman reported that they had had much success with this approach in St. Petersburg with as many as 5,000 persons responding. He said they publish a count of reader reaction, a disclaimer noting the non-scientific nature of the poll, and numerous comments from

the coupons returned. Many readers are eager to participate, he said, and some almost consider it a duty to enter their viewpoint. He said the coupons thrive on use, which builds up awareness of them, and he recommended the use of house ads to promote them.[14]

Questions and issues can be raised in various special features. The Milwaukee Journal and The Philadelphia Bulletin developed a question feature in which readers were invited to write letters in answer to a question posed by the paper. The letters and an editorial on the topic were then run together in a type of forum presentation.[15] The Athens Banner-Herald, noted earlier, has used an issue-of-the-week feature in which it invited readers to react briefly on a form provided in the paper to some issue each week. The "votes" were recorded and reported along with a story including excerpts from the readers' reactions.

Editors can build rapport with readers by writing columns, perhaps as often as weekly, in which they discuss the paper's staff and policies. An editor might, for example, explain the processes by which policy expressed in a particular editorial was determined or explain how some other problem was handled through a telephone call rather than an editorial. He could explain various aspects of newspaper operation, respond to critics, or provide other information that would help readers understand and appreciate the newspaper operation.

Some newspapers may wish to provide space for resident critics or ombudsmen to discuss their work and views with the public. The Washington Post developed an in-house criticism program in the early 1970s, and periodically, the critic shared his comments with readers in a column on the opposite editorial page.[16] In a somewhat similar fashion the St. Petersburg Times

has shared information received on the telephone hot line it established to hear complaints from readers.[17]

While only 2% of the newspapers surveyed indicated that they had added ombudsmen type columns in recent years, 9% indicated that they had begun using columns to permit staff members to express dissents, or criticisms of specific policies or stands. Some contend that such columns confuse readers or encourage them to believe that the newspaper is not really taking a stand. Those using them evidently believe that such actions can help staff morale, assure that minority views are aired and improve the newspaper's image in regard to fairness.

Exchange editorials, or opinions of other editors, have been used for many years by many newspapers. Almost two-thirds (65%, of the dailies indicated that they use them at some time. The exchange can be used to show that others agree with the newspapers' views, to present a differing viewpoint, or perhaps as a vehicle for including humor on the page.

The idea of running reader viewpoints certainly is not new. The letters columns essentially do that, and letters have been used for years. But some newspapers, such as the Winston-Salem Sunday Journal-Sentinel have experimented with new approaches for handling readers' views. The Journal-Sentinel tried running readers' views periodically as editorials in place of its own views. That paper's "Readers Write" feature went beyond the usual letters format in that each Sunday a single subject was treated and differing viewpoints sought and presented.[18]

Although most editors would support the Supreme Court's decision to deny the existence of a readers' "right of reply" to newspapers, most should find it desirable to provide space for such replies in letters or special features.

The St. Petersburg Times, for example, has offered up to 350 words for non-recommended candidates to respond to the paper's endorsement editorials. Editorial Page Editor Pittman said this helps to persuade readers that their political editorials are not an attempt of a monopoly newspaper to dictate decisions. "The 'opportunity to reply,' or access for the political opposition, builds credibility in the place it matters most, the white-hot climax of a political campaign," Pittman said.[19]

Appearance

Although 89% of the newspapers surveyed have taken one or more steps to improve the appearance of their editorial pages in recent years, many newspapers could still use some dressing up. As typography expert Edmund C. Arnold, professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, wrote this past year in an article for The Masthead, reading editorial pages is hard work. Editors need to use all the salesmanship they can muster through attractive layout of editorial content. Arnold recommended that the typography of editorial pages be as different as possible from that of news pages so that it would stand out. He recommended the use of a "logo" such as "Comment" or "Opinion" along with different column widths, larger body types and other variations to stress this difference. Arnold suggested also that editors need not layout their pages in the same manner each day. They can use different emphases and vary the shape of features such as cartoons. He said all corners of the page should be anchored by display elements.[20]

The most frequent changes noted in the survey were the addition of white space by 74% of the respondents and the elimination of column rules by 61%. Other changes and the number making them included use of larger headlines (40%), larger body type (34%), more art work (34%), reduction in the number of columns on the page (25%), occasional use of color (4%), and miscellaneous changes (9%).

Cartoons, editorial pictures, maps, charts, diagrams and other pictorials can be used to add interest to the page. Many newspapers have used illustrations with special features and columns; others have provided small illustrations or mug shots with some of their editorials.

A number of newspapers have experimented with running photographs on the editorial page. At times these take the form of picture editorials by depicting some problem such as a slum, polluted river, or half-starved child. More than half (57%) of the editors reported using such pictures on occasion. (See Table 7). At other times the pictures may simply provide a pictorial change of pace. The New Britain (Conn.) Herald reported a favorable response several years ago when it substituted a picture page for the usual editorial fare one day. The seven pictures, each with a cutline, include a boy fishing, a girl reading on a park lawn, a waterfall, a tot on a swing, a dog trying to reach a water fountain, a mother and daughter wandering through a brook, and an elderly man catching the sun in the bleachers.[21] Some would argue that diverting an entire page, even occasionally, would be a cop out. But a single picture even without strong editorial content might provide for many an acceptable change of pace.

Staffs

Many newspapers could improve their editorial pages by expanding, and perhaps diversifying, their editorial page staffs and by giving editorial writers more time for their research. The survey indicates that 42% of the nation's dailies do not have even one person assigned full-time to the editorial page. (See Table 8). All the larger newspapers, 100,001 circulation and over, have at least two persons assigned, and more than half of them (56%) have at least five persons assigned. But many of the others have to depend on a

one-person staff or on one or more part-time persons to write their editorials.

Where enough persons are involved, either part-time or full-time, staffs can be improved by diversification. The point of view of a woman, a member of a minority group, or perhaps a young adult could help many staffs obtain a better perspective of issues. The survey provided limited information on employment but did indicate that 12% of the newspapers surveyed employed a woman on their editorial pages and about 4% employed either a black or a member of some other minority group. Newspapers might provide some diversification by having reporters participate in editorial discussions, write occasional editorials, or even exchange jobs with editorial writers for a time. There is some danger in such actions, however, in that writing editorials could affect the reporter's image of objectivity with news sources.

The Courier-News of Plainfield, New Jersey, obtained diversification on its editorial board by assigning three different staff members from other areas to sit on the board each month. City editors (the paper has four), copy editors, reporters, and photographers all signed up to serve. Many continued to contribute editorials and ideas even after their tours ended. Virtually everyone who served had praise for the idea.[22] Diversification can also be provided through internships. The Cleveland Plain Dealer reported an interesting plus it received from an intern it had working at the time of man's first visit to the moon. The intern, a 21-year-old college senior, was thrilled by the adventure, but in no way surprised. She had grown up with the Sputnik and had always believed reaching the moon was something just around the corner. Her reaction was included in a special editorial page coverage of the event and demonstrated vividly a little-suspected aspect of the generation gap.[23]

Research

Finally, it seems certain that many newspapers could improve their

editorial pages by making greater use of the research tools available to them. More newspapers need to find out more about what people read and why, what types of editorial page features influence them and how. Virtually all of the editors surveyed said their editorial page readership is greater than or about as great as it was several years ago and virtually all said they believe their editorials do influence readers in some way. But few reported extensive data about the hows and whys of this readership and influence. Editors need to make greater use of existing research findings and conduct more research of their own. Much, for example, already has been learned about how people can be persuaded. This should be of value to editorial writers, especially if they know their audiences well.[24]

Conclusions

It appears from the author's study and others that good editorial pages are vital to good newspapers. They provide a vehicle for editors to lead, they provide a forum for editors, columnists, cartoonists, and readers to discuss issues that are important to them. They express the tone and character of the newspaper. They help newspapers retain credibility by helping them keep news and opinion separate. It also appears that some are doing a reasonably good job, and many are seeking to improve. All should be encouraged to improve their editorial pages for their products are important to us not only as journalists but also as citizens in a government where free interchange of ideas is essential.

Notes

1. Edgar T. Zelsmann, "Studies Reveal Editorial Shortcomings," The Masthead, Spring, 1977, p. 39.

2. Louis M. Lyons, "The Role of the Editorial Page," Nieman Reports, December 1970, p. 24.

3. Ernest C. Hynds, "Editorial Pages Remain Vital," The Masthead, Fall 1975, pp. 19-22; Hynds, "Editorial Pages Are Taking Stands, Providing Forums," Journalism Quarterly, Autumn 1976, pp. 532-35.

4. Mark Ethridge, "Don't Bank the Editorial Fires: Take Back the Voice Surrendered to the Columnists," The Quill, February 1967, p. 15. From the text of Sigma Delta Chi Lecture delivered Nov. 16, 1966 at Columbia University under sponsorship of the Sigma Delta Chi Foundation with arrangements made by the SDX chapter at Columbia.

5. Lenora Williamson, "Critics suggest ways to improve editorials," Editor & Publisher, November 2, 1974, p. 13.

6. Ernest C. Hynds, "Local emphasis seen for editorial pages," Editor & Publisher, February 12, 1977, p. 18.

7. Desmond Stone, "Put Some Zing in Your Writing," The Masthead, Spring, 1977, pp. 24-27.

8. Kenneth R. Byerly, "Some of the Best Editorials Are Never Written," The Masthead, Summer 1963, pp. 23-25.

9. Joanna Wragg, "Readers Can Write -- Or Phone," The Masthead, Fall 1976, pp. 5-6.

10. Ernest C. Hynds, "Survey Profiles Editorial Cartoonists," The Masthead, Spring 1977, p. 13.

11. Robert W. Smith, "A Youthful Columnist Adds Spice," The Masthead, Summer 1970, pp. 37-38.

12. "Viewpoints of action leaders presented in 'Common Carrier,'" Editor & Publisher, September 26, 1970, p. 10.

13. Robert T. Pittman, "10 Best Bets for Edit Pages," The Masthead, Summer 1974, pp. 34-38; Glen Dromgoole, "'Pro-con' technique adds sparkle to editorial pages," Editor & Publisher, December 8, 1973, p. 10.

14. Robert T. Pittman, "The Name of the Game Is Access," The Masthead, Winter 1976, p. 25.

15. Pittman, "10 Best Bets for Edit Pages," p. 32.

16. Ben H. Bagdikian, "Bagdikian's post-mortem: keep up criticism," The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, October 1972, pp. 1, 12-13.

17. "Coping with readers' gripes becomes task for specialists," Editor & Publisher, January 30, 1971, p. 7.

18. Philly Murtha, "N.C. daily lets readers write Sunday editorials," Editor & Publisher, June 8, 1974, pp. 13, 66.

19. Pittman, "The Name of the Game Is Access," p. 25.

20. Edmund C. Arnold, "Aiming for Visual Excitement," The Masthead, Spring 1976, pp. 16-20.

21. Henry M. Keezing, "Try a Page of Pretty Pictures," The Masthead, Fall 1974, pp. 42-43.

22. John J. Curley, "Newsmen take turns on Plainfield editorial board," The Gannetteer, May 1971, p. 36.

23. Howard Preston, "A Summer Intern--With Skirts," The Masthead, Summer 1970, pp. 36-37.

24. Harry W. Stonecipher, "Thoughts on Reader Persuasibility," The Masthead, Spring 1976, pp. 36-40.

Table 1 -- Candidate Endorsements

(Percentage of newspapers that endorse political candidates at various levels)

Paper by Size		Local	State	National	Do not endorse
Under 10,000	(N=48)	44%	65%	58%	28%
10,001-25,000	(N=61)	72%	84%	85%	11%
25,001-100,000	(N=49)	82%	88%	94%	4%
100,001 and over	(N=17)	88%	88%	88%	6%

Table 2 -- Editorial Sources

(Percentage of newspapers that most often use syndicated or other non-staff sources for editorials)

Under 10,000	(N=47)	21%
10,001-25,000	(N=57)	18%
25,001-100,000	(N=45)	2%
100,000 and over	(N=17)	0%

Table 3 -- Handling Local Issues

(Percentage of newspapers placing greater emphasis on local issues in recent years)

Under 10,000	(N=48)	76%
10,001-25,000	(N=61)	64%
25,001-100,000	(N=48)	60%
100,001 and over	(N=17)	29%

Table 4 -- Use of Letters

(Percentage of newspapers that use at least 70% of the letters to the editor they receive)

Under 10,000	(N=43)	95%
10,001-25,000	(N=56)	98%
25,001-100,000	(N=46)	69%
100,001 and over	(N=17)	18%

Table 5 -- Use of Cartoonists

(Percentage of newspapers that employ their own cartoonists and percentage of these cartoonists who are only part-time on the editorial page.)

		Employ Cartoonists	Number Part-time
Under 10,000	(N=47)	11%	100%
10,001-25,000	(N=62)	15%	78%
25,001-100,000	(N=49)	33%	50%
100,001 and over	(N=17)	82%	14%

Table 6 -- Selection of Columnists

(Percentage of newspapers that seek to balance liberal and conservative columnists, run primarily those that agree with the newspaper's philosophy, or choose them for drawing power regardless of views.)

		Seek to Balance	Run Like Views	Select Primarily For Drawing Power
Under 10,000	(N=44)	56%	14%	30%
10,001-25,000	(N=55)	62%	18%	20%
25,001-100,000	(N=44)	60%	4%	36%
100,001 and over	(N=13)	70%	15%	15%

Table 7 -- Use of Editorial Pictures

(Percentage of newspapers that on occasion use editorial pictures)

Under 10,000	(N=48)	51%
10,001-25,000	(N=64)	52%
25,001-100,000	(N=48)	47%
100,001 and over	(N=17)	65%

Table 8 -- Employment

(Percentage of newspapers that have at least one person assigned full-time to the editorial page)

Under 10,000	(N=34)	41%
10,001-25,000	(N=56)	61%
25,001-100,000	(N=45)	91%
100,001 and over	(N=16)	100%